mann to contend with, and that unending wrangle as to whether *a* or *the* National Home was intended. Ah, happy days when he was Sidney Webb, peacefully turning over municipal records in quiet cellars, peacefully collecting information about the inadequate past and devising an adequate future. Ah, happy Fabian days!

It was more than an economic blizzard which swept over the Government, a spiritual blizzard too, freezing their hearts within them. Where were the hopes which had buoyed them up when the prospect of taking office seemed so remote? Where the projects so confidently put forward, the promises so confidently made? Education!—how they had expatiated upon the benefits of education and on the right of all to enjoy them; on the gains which would accrue to society if instead of children being thrown on the labour-market at fourteen, they were kept one year, or even two or three years longer at school. Now they came forward with a modest measure, just for raising the School Age to fifteen, and trouble came upon them, not only from the Opposition and their treacherous Liberal allies, but from the religious bodies as well. Nonconformists were enraged that Church schools should receive grants-in-aid; private money was not available for equipping Church schools to fulfil the provisions of the new Act, public money was not available for replacing them by State schools; Nonconformists and Anglicans joined together in their opposition to Roman Catholic institutions benefiting financially from the proposed legislation. It was an

unseemly wrangle.

In the House of Commons the Government were defeated on an amendment in the name of John Scurr, one of their own supporters.[9] When the Prime Minister was asked what he pro-

[9] MacDonald's Statement, before the vote on Scurr's amendment was taken, was characteristic:

'This is a question of conscience so far as the Catholics and Nonconformists are concerned, and, in the settlement of that question of conscience, it is all in the interest of goodwill and of harmony and of putting this Bill into operation when it is carried, if the Government are left a free hand as would happen if this amendment were not pressed to a division—if the Government